

Lemon Poppy Seed EASTER CAKE

Spring has sprung! And I've got the perfect cake for the season. This lemon poppy seed cake is possibly the best batter I've ever made. It's smooth, fluffy, and citrusy, and bakes a lovely, dense crumb. Layered up with robin's-egg blue vanilla buttercream and lemon curd, this cake is a heavenly spring bite. Top with fresh strawberries, chocolate eggs, and a white chocolate bunny for that Easter charm.

INGREDIENTS:

For the Cake:

2 ½ cups flour
1 ¾ tsp baking powder
¼ tsp baking soda
½ tsp kosher salt
½ cup unsalted butter, room temperature
½ cup vegetable oil
1 ½ cups sugar
4 large eggs, room temperature
½ tsp vanilla
¾ cup milk
½ cup fresh lemon juice (about 3 lemons)
Zest of 2 lemons
2 T poppy seeds

For the Buttercream:

2 sticks unsalted butter, room temperature
8 cups powdered sugar
1 T vanilla
Blue food coloring
Milk, if necessary
1 T cocoa powder
Splash of vodka

For assembly:

¼ cup sugar
¼ cup water
Candy eggs
Fresh strawberries
White chocolate Easter bunny
Lemon Curd

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit. Grease and flour four 6-inch cake pans.

For the Cake:

In a stand mixer, cream butter, sugar,

and vanilla until fluffy. Add in oil, eggs, and salt and beat until light in color and well incorporated. About 2-3 minutes. Sift flour, baking powder, and baking soda in a separate bowl. Mix lemon juice and milk and add half to the batter. Mix until incorporated. Add half of the flour mixture and beat until just incorporated. Repeat with remaining milk mixture and flour. Fold in lemon zest and poppy seeds.

Pour batter into cake pans and bake for 20-30 minutes, or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted in the center. Let cool and remove cakes.

For the Buttercream:

In a stand mixer, whip butter for buttercream until fluffy. Add in vanilla and a drop of blue food coloring. Slowly incorporate powdered sugar, and more blue coloring if needed. Thin with milk as needed. Whip for 6-7 minutes to ensure a fluffy frosting.

To assemble:

* Lemon curd filling can be tricky and cause your cake to slide around while frosting. Use a cake dowel to support the cake or skip the lemon curd and just use frosting. Serve the cake with a spoonful of lemon curd on top. *

Microwave ¼ cup of sugar with ¼ cup of water. Drizzle a bit on a cake layer. Spread a thin amount of frosting over the top of the layer. Pipe a border of frosting around the top outside edge of



photo by Carly Cerniglia

the layer to seal in the lemon curd. Spoon a bit of lemon curd onto the layer and spread evenly. Top with another layer of cake. Let chill in the fridge for 5 minutes. Repeat the process until you reach the top layer. Apply a layer of frosting and chill the cake for another 10-15 minutes. Re-whip the buttercream if needed and continue frosting the entire cake. Mix cocoa powder and a bit of vodka into a thin paste.

Using a clean paint brush, flick the chocolate mixture at the cake to create a speckled robin's egg look. Dollop remaining frosting on top of cake to secure the chocolate bunny. Decorate with strawberries and chocolate eggs. Enjoy!

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